

Mai'a K. Davis Cross. 2011. *Security Integration in Europe – How Knowledge-Based Networks are transforming the European Union*. The University of Michigan Press. 292 pp, \$35.00

The mainstream IR theories usually assume that security policies represent the last bastion of state sovereignty, and that states are not willing to give it up very easily. On the other hand, the citizens of the European Union are bearing witness to the fact that certain policies that traditionally would have been connected to the state governance are now being conducted by the EU-level actors. Asylum, migrations, EU civilian missions in third countries, to mention just a few – represent examples of supranational and integrated security policies. Indeed, new theoretical approaches are now appearing so these unexpected processes could be examined. In her book *Security Integration in Europe – how knowledge-based networks are transforming the European Union* Mai'a K. Davis Cross argues that epistemic communities stand behind a large number of initiatives that led to the security integration in the EU. These communities are the “invisible” actors that push towards integration in these problematic areas.

The concept of epistemic community has been used in the IR literature, and it is not a novelty. Even though Davis Cross largely accepts the basic concept of epistemic community developed by Peter Haas, she redefines it in an attempt to place it within the social context of the EU. Peter Haas defines an epistemic community as “a network of professionals with recognized expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge within that domain or issue area.”¹ Therefore Davis Cross emphasizes those elements that significantly impact political outcomes in the EU, such as shared causal beliefs and common policy enterprise. On the other hand, the underpinning the expertise knowledge instead of scientific knowledge enables the conducting of case studies that examine the role of committees and other EU bodies in the shaping of security policies. For the purpose of research of bodies such as COREPER², the EU Military Committee, the Political and Security Committee and others, a wide theoretical base and a useful methodological approach for epistemic communities have been developed. This theoretical base and methodological approach can be used not only for investigating the security policy-making processes in the EU but on other levels, sectors and policy areas as well.

1 Haas, 1992, 3.

2 Committee of Permanent Representatives

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All case studies conducted and presented in the book are actually striving to answer what seems to be the crucial question: how are certain important non-state groups (committees, expert groups, etc.) that deal with security issues managing to provoke political outcomes that lead towards security integration in Europe. These communities, created within a group, are not so visible to the public, their members are not well-known among the wider circles, and their jurisdictions are quite narrow. Reviewing of case studies and the broader context of the complex decision-making processes leads to a conclusion that the power of persuasion (power derived from knowledge) is the crucial link between the epistemic communities and the top-level decision makers. Epistemic communities embodied in different kinds of groups based predominantly in Brussels are persuading the capitals of communities' members which are then allowing the decisions and consensus made by epistemic community to be realized in reality. In view of the fact that epistemic communities constructed within EU institutions dealing with security policies are generally pushing for more integrative processes, integrated security policies in the European Union usually represent the final political outcomes.

As mentioned above, Davis Cross has re-conceptualized certain elements of Haas' approach to epistemic community. By abstracting some factors that lead to the creation of an epistemic community, she investigates those that could be applied to institutional and other bodies that are operating with security policies in the EU. These factors are then being used for measuring the strength of the epistemic community, i.e. EU institutional and non-institutional bodies and the success of their persuading power. Following this theoretical and methodological framework, significant and important results can be gleaned from the case studies conducted by the author. For example, members of the COREPER II³ have a similar professional background, they meet frequently on both formal and informal levels, share similar *Weltanschauung* and, in time, a common culture as well. These factors increase the autonomy and flexibility that is reflected in the final political outcome. Therefore, the influence that COREPER II had on the creation and implementation of the Strategy on Radicalization and Recruitment⁴ led to more integrated counterterrorism policies. This would not have been raised to a supranational level had there not been for such an influence. On the other hand, the Political and Security Committee (PSC), even though using the same methodological tools, represents a weaker epistemic community with activities that could have, but did not, lead to the creation of more integrated external security policies of the EU. The committee's members hadn't managed to develop autonomy and flexibility required for (in their own view) successful final political outcomes.

3 The Committee of Permanent Representatives II gathers representatives of the EU member states, at the level of ambassadors.

4 Strategy on Radicalization and Recruitment (SSR) is a document defining the terrorist threat to the European Union, and outlining the proactive measures the EU should conduct specifically in regard with al-Qaeda's activities (Davis Cross 2011, 110).

It is important to mention the approach to security that has been taken in this study. Focusing on its broader concept, David Cross also stresses the impossibility of making clear distinction between internal and external security. Indeed, if such a concept of security and such a view on internal/external relations related to security policy had not been taken, it would be difficult to understand not only the dynamics of the security epistemic communities operating in the EU, but also to understand security integration in Europe in more general terms.

This study shows the importance of the concept of epistemic communities for security studies in various ways. It also shows the significance of the constructivist approach in understanding the security integration in Europe, and even the utility of sociological methods of examining the inter-group dynamics for understanding the role that those security epistemic communities play today. Although superficially it may seem that this study is offering only the role of knowledge based-networks in the EU today, this is not the case. The problem of democratic deficit is also addressed, bearing in mind the elite structure of researched groups as well as the question of the final outcome of security integration processes in the EU. The book clearly shows how security epistemic communities impact the integration and why it is important for the discipline of security studies to continue investigating them. However, what is not so clear is what the limits of these communities' activities happen to be. It is difficult to conclude if the member states, as independent actors, are prepared to give up their sovereignty on hard security issues. Consequently, this study is valuable for scholars and practitioners in security fields for two reasons. Firstly, it raises the significant question of security epistemic communities in general. Secondly, it may inspire new research from different theoretical approaches on security integration in Europe, specifically from the point of view of the realists who will see quite a challenge in this book when it comes to answering the question: Which actors are actually crucial in shaping EU security policy integration?

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References

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